

for his commitment to our young people.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY AND THE SECURE ACT OF 2005

(Mr. CLEAVER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my condolences to the victims and their families of Tuesday's school bus accident in Liberty, Missouri, just north of my district in Kansas City. That tragic accident killed two adults and injured 23 children, some critically. The tragic accident of which I speak, Mr. Speaker, has generated a great deal of trauma in our community, understandably, because these injuries could easily have been prevented had the school bus in question been equipped with safety belts. Over 23 million children ride school buses every day, and almost none of them are equipped with seatbelts. While no one anticipates a tragedy like that which occurred in Liberty, we do owe it to our children to do all we can to ensure their safety while traveling to and from school.

Yesterday, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA), my good friend and colleague, introduced the SECURE Act to equip school buses with safety belts. By supporting this common sense measure, we can help ensure that our children's ride to school and their safety is assured. I have cosponsored the SECURE Act, and I urge all Members to do the same.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share good news with the American people.

Last week, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that 274,000 new jobs were created in April. That means the economy has created nearly 3.5 million jobs since May 2003. We have seen steady job gains for each of the last 23 months, and more Americans are working than ever before.

Another indicator which shows that we are on the road to recovery is home sales. A recent report by the Commerce Department indicates sales of new homes grew by 12.2 percent in March to the highest level in the history of the Nation's housing market.

Clearly, the economy's growth is a direct result of the pro-growth agenda of the President and this Republican Congress.

By encouraging fiscal responsibility in the budget and passing pro-growth bills such as the Death Tax Repeal and the Bankruptcy Bill, Republican Members continue to show their commitment to America's economy.

However, there is still work to do to continue to grow the economy and get more Americans working. I look for-

ward to continue working with the President to find ways to lower the prices we pay at the pump and will continue to urge my colleagues in the Senate to pass the energy bill that would put more than 500,000 Americans to work.

WAKE-UP CALL FOR AMERICA

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a simple pronouncement this morning. This is a wake-up call for America. In today's headlines we have: "United gets okay to drop pension funds." Earned pension funds, earned benefits now on the chopping block of America.

I have great concern for America's airlines, and I will work with them as we have worked in the past after 9/11 to shore them up. But is it not a shame that America cannot invest in its pension fund and believe when it is time for retirement that fund will be there?

Wake up America. Social Security is now falling to the same axe. This President wants to cut your benefits, the major social safety net of Americans. An invested process is now under siege.

We think it is a divided question. It is not a divided question. It is a question for the middle class. It is a question for working Americans. It is a question that Democrats have stood fast. We will not see Social Security denied or destroyed. And wake up America, because the pensions of America are now under the vulnerable chopping block that anybody who needs a dime or a dollar will go into your pension fund, whether you are a private corporation or the public sector. Wake up America.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, with the specter of fiscal collapse facing our children and grandchildren's public retirement, Social Security reform is an idea whose time has come. And President Bush, never one to flinch from a good fight, is to be commended for taking it on.

Social Security reform means keeping its promise in tact for seniors and all who choose to remain in the system. But Social Security reform also means offering a better deal to younger Americans in the form of voluntary personal accounts.

And we can do it all, Mr. Speaker, without raising taxes on working families, small businesses and family farms. So let us get on with it. Let the House lead on Social Security reform. If the House goes first, we will produce a reform that is consistent with the Presi-

dent's vision for a 21st century public retirement system.

SENATE FILIBUSTER

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, the Republican Congress and Republican President are overcome with power, so much so that they want to fundamentally change our Nation's government into one where a single political party in power holds total control.

And how do the Republicans want to lay claim to absolute power? In order to break down the separation of powers and ram through their appointees to the judicial branch, the President and the Republican leadership want to eliminate a 200-year-old American rule that permits the Senate the right to extend debate in the confirmation of Presidential nominees.

Mr. Speaker, the role of the Senate in the confirmation of Presidential nominees is a central element of our democracy. The confirmation process underscores our Founding Fathers' commitment to the separation of powers and their abhorrence of simple majority rule. It provides for essential checks and balances to ensure we remain a Nation ruled by laws and not just by men.

We do not need a monarchy. We need to preserve our Republic.

CENTER FOR RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk by groups in Washington, D.C. about ethics, making sure that Members of Congress hold to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

It is good stuff. But one of these groups concerned about ethics, the Center for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, is not the nonpartisan entity we may have thought. The Center for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, CREW, Mr. Speaker, is a partisan group with a partisan political agenda.

According to The Wall Street Journal, board members of the group, including a former Clinton White House pollster, have contributed over \$340,000 to left-wing causes in the past 4 years.

The group's director has said, "Since I started, the main thing I want to do was to go after Tom DeLay. DeLay is my top target."

This group is concerned about ethics, Mr. Speaker? No, I do not think so. It is about partisan politics. And they only have one agenda, and that is to file complaints against Republicans.

Mr. Speaker, as someone new to Washington, I am not used to this Washington, D.C. parlor game of dirty tricks. This is about politics, Mr. Speaker, not about ethics.